

Before the
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268-0001

Phippsburg Post Office
Phippsburg, Colorado

Docket No. A2012-81

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS
(January 31, 2012)

The Commission received correspondence from four postal customers (Participants) opposing the closure of the Phippsburg, Colorado post office (Phippsburg post office).¹ After the closure delivery and retail services will be provided by highway contract route service to cluster box units (CBUs) through the Oak Creek post office.² The Commission should affirm the Final Determination to close the Phippsburg post office.

Participant concerns. Participants raise issues related to the effect on the community and effect on postal services. They assert that the Phippsburg post office is beneficial for residents, especially senior citizens, because it serves a gathering place that holds the community together.³ They express particular concern about senior citizens, whom they contend will be adversely affected by the closure.⁴ Petitioner Williams argues that expected cost savings from the closure will not be as large as predicted because of the cost of installing and maintaining CBUs. M. Williams Participant Statement.

¹ Petition for Review Received from Michael Williams Regarding the Phippsburg, CO Post Office 80469, November 23, 2011 (M. Williams Petition); Notice of Intervention Received from Elena Beal, November 25, 2011 (Beal Intervention); Notice of Intervention Received from Mr. and Mrs. William V. Williams, November 25, 2011 (W. Williams Intervention); Petition for Review Received from John Bergstrom Regarding the Phippsburg, CO Post Office 80469, November 29, 2011 (Bergstrom Petition); Participant Statement Received from Michael Williams, Petitioner, January 4, 2012 (M. Williams Participant Statement); Participant Statement Received from John Bergstrom, January 18, 2012 (Bergstrom Participant Statement).

² Final Determination to Close the Phippsburg, CO Post Office and Continue to Provide Service by Highway Contract Route Service (Final Determination) at 2.

³ M. Williams Petition; W. Williams Intervention; Bergstrom Petition; M. Williams Participant Statement; Bergstrom Participant Statement.

⁴ M. Williams Petition; M. Williams Participant Statement; Beal Intervention; W. Williams Intervention.

The Postal Service addresses Participants' concerns in its comments.⁵ It explains that carrier service is especially beneficial to senior citizens and those who face special challenges because the carrier can provide delivery and retail services to CBUs. *Id.* at 6. It asserts that residents may continue to meet informally, socialize, and share information at other locations and residences in the community. *Id.* at 9. It responds to Petitioner Williams by stating that the one-time cost of constructing the CBUs is overshadowed by the yearly savings expected from the closure. *Id.* at 10.

Other issues. The Public Representative notes two issues not raised by Participants. The Oak Creek post office, which has 111 post office boxes available, has an insufficient number of post office boxes to accommodate all 144 post office box customers from the Phippsburg post office. *See id.* However, because the Postal Service is also installing CBUs, Phippsburg customers will continue to receive regular and effective service via delivery to CBUs or post office boxes at the Oak Creek post office.⁶ The Postal Service should ensure that an adequate number of post office boxes will be available at the Oak Creek post office to meet demand. *Id.* at 9-10 (citation omitted).

Also, the Final Determination incorrectly states that no customers attended the community meeting on June 15, 2011. Final Determination at 2. The Administrative Record confirms that 42 customers attended the meeting. Administrative Record, Item No. 24. However, this error is not material and does not appear to have affected the outcome of the Postal Service's decision to close the Phippsburg post office.

Conclusion. The Postal Service's Final Determination to close the Phippsburg post office appears procedurally in order. The Public Representative concludes that no persuasive argument has been presented that would prevent the Commission affirming the Postal Service's Final Determination to close the Phippsburg post office.

⁵ United States Postal Service Comments Regarding Appeal, January 17, 2012.

⁶ See Docket No. A2012-2, Order No. 1167, Order Affirming Determination, January 24, 2012, at 9 (Chairman Goldway and Vice Chairman Langley, dissenting).

Respectfully submitted,

Katrina R. Martinez
Public Representative

901 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001
PH: (202) 789-6871; FAX: (202) 789-6861
email: kmartinez@prc.gov